

# MISSOURI CONSERVATIONIST

VOLUME 85, ISSUE 4, APRIL 2024  
SERVING NATURE & YOU







Serving nature and you

# DISCOVER NATURE

Turkeys are an important wildlife resource in Missouri and are found mostly in mixed forests and grasslands statewide. Missouri turkey hunters can pursue turkeys in the spring and fall. To learn more about turkey hunting in Missouri visit [mdc.mo.gov/turkey](http://mdc.mo.gov/turkey).



## wild turkey muffuletta sandwiches

Serves 4

### Relish

- ¾ cup chopped red onion
- ½ cup chopped sweet red pepper
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- ½ cup kalamata olives, pitted
- ½ cup drained small Spanish pimiento-stuffed green olives
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons drained capers
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 12 fresh basil leaves, roughly sliced
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh oregano
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh chives
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- Freshly ground black pepper

### Sandwich

- 1 24-inch-long French or sourdough baguette, split lengthwise
- 12 ounces cooked wild turkey breast, sliced
- 4 ounces Jarlsberg or good Swiss cheese, sliced
- Tomato slices (optional)

**Combine** relish ingredients in food processor and chop finely. Add pepper to taste. Transfer to bowl. Let stand 1 hour at room temperature.

**Spread** half of muffuletta relish over each cut side of bread. Place turkey and cheese on bottom half of bread. Top with tomato slices. Cover with top half of bread. Cut diagonally into 4 sandwiches.

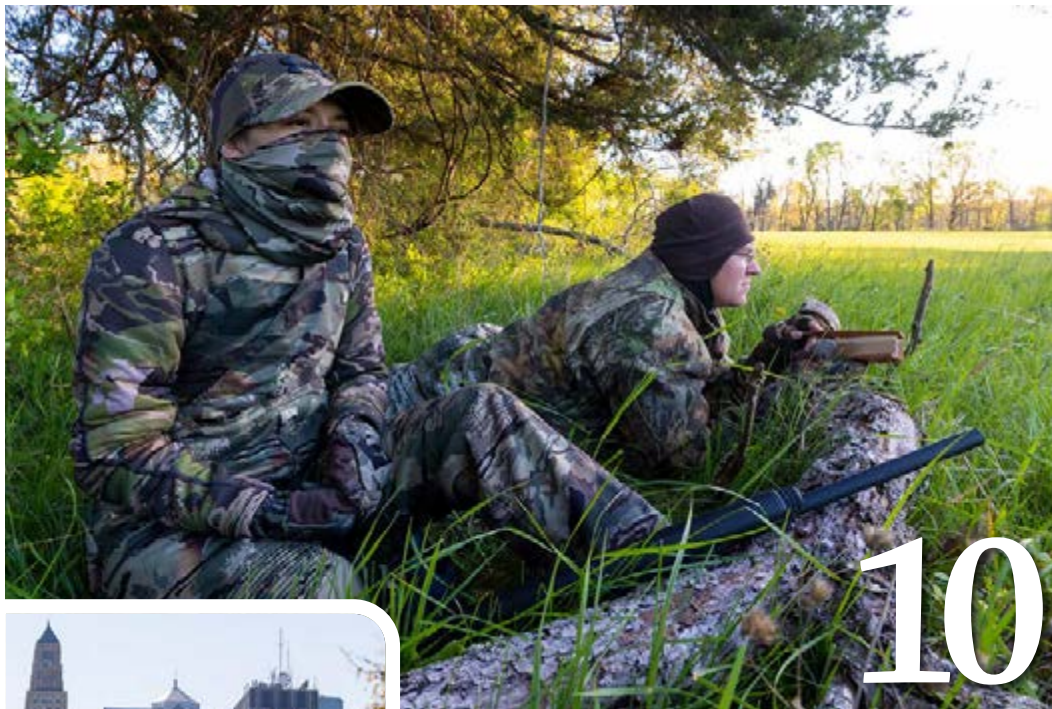
Find more wild recipes in *Cooking Wild in Missouri*. Order yours at [mdcnatureshop.com](http://mdcnatureshop.com).





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American robins

## MISSOURI CONSERVATIONIST



### ON THE COVER

Red-bellied woodpecker

**NOPPADOL PAOTHONG**

600mm lens +1.4 teleconverter  
f/8, 1/160 sec, ISO 800

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# Inbox



## Letters to the Editor

Submissions reflect readers' opinions and may be edited for length and clarity. Email [Magazine@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:Magazine@mdc.mo.gov) or write to us:

MISSOURI  
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## INSPIRING

Thank you for a clean, neat, and inspiring magazine. I appreciate your efforts and the high-quality content of the *Missouri Conservationist*.

Titus S. Martin  
Rich Hill

## CONTAINER GARDENING FOR THE BEES

Thank you for your wonderful magazine. Each month I learn something new.

Even though I am afraid of bees, your February 2024 issue was very informative [*Chasing the Buzz*, Page 10].

I will have to set aside my fear to do some of the container gardening you mentioned [*Prairie on the Patio*, Page 16]. My little patio needs some color. Being a senior citizen, I can no longer take care of a large garden, so the containers will be perfect for me.

Keep up the good work.

Marilee Reeds Wentzville

## TAGGING ROCKS

*Nature Lab* in the February issue [Page 4] made me laugh out loud — tagging rocks? Really? I knew of tagging waterfowl and tagging fish and even tagging all kinds of game and nongame animals. But pit tagging rocks? It really made me laugh until I read the article and understood the purpose and benefits of such studies.

What a great conservation department and magazine we have.

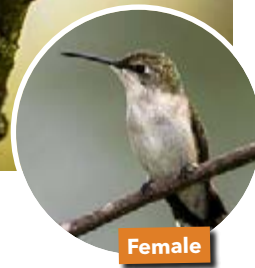
Jim LePage Springfield

## CLARIFICATION

The ruby-throated hummingbird featured on Page 26 of the March issue was, in fact, a male.



Male ruby-throated hummingbird



Female

The iridescent colors of many birds, especially hummingbirds, is caused by the structure of the feathers, which reflect a particular color. So, it isn't pigment that provides color. This means that from certain angles or when there isn't much light, the colors don't show. In this picture, the throat feathers appear brownish and many of the green feathers also look brown. But some of the green feathers that are catching the light show the iridescent green. Females, in contrast, have no throat patch. Their throats are white.

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## Have a Question for a Commissioner?

Send a note using our online contact form at [mdc.mo.gov/commissioners](http://mdc.mo.gov/commissioners).

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The Missouri Department of Conservation protects and manages the fish, forest, and wildlife of the state. We facilitate and provide opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy, and learn about these resources.





### Want to see your photos in the Missouri Conservationist?

Share your photos on Flickr at  
[flickr.com/groups/mdcreaderphotos-2024](https://www.flickr.com/groups/mdcreaderphotos-2024)  
or email [Readerphoto@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:Readerphoto@mdc.mo.gov).



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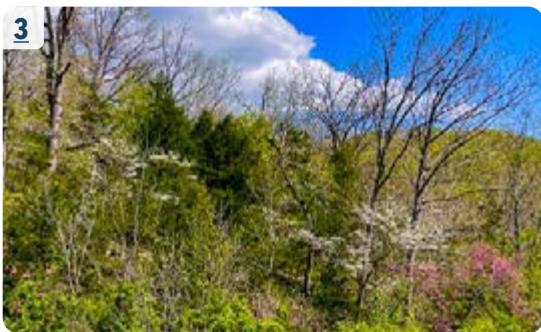
1 | Coyote by  
Pamela Rethy,  
via Flickr

2 | Greater  
yellowlegs by  
Michael Woods,  
via Flickr

3 | Spring  
trees by Debra  
Jo Berger,  
via website  
submission



2



3



### Want another chance to see your photos in the magazine?

➔ In the December issue, we plan to feature even more great reader photos. Use the submission methods above to send us your best year-round pictures of native Missouri wildlife, flora, natural scenery, and friends and family engaged in outdoor activities. Please include where the photo was taken and what it depicts.

TAYLOR LYNN PHOTOGRAPHY



# Up Front

with Sara Parker Pauley

✳ Sunday dinner was special in my home growing up. Before the week took us different directions, our family would gather together to enjoy a delicious meal of fried chicken or a lovely pot roast with potatoes and carrots. And then there was dessert — perhaps it was a homemade cherry pie thanks to Granny's cherry tree or an apple crisp courtesy of our backyard apple tree. With a little extra time — and a touch of Crisco — my sweet mother, who was a teacher during the week, shared her love in part through her Sunday meals that are now precious memories.

Recently on a glorious late February day, I delighted in assisting MDC staff place huge cedars into key spots on Table Rock Lake to enhance fish habitat. Barge load after barge load was offered to the lake's dark waters and I wondered how long it would take before bass, crappie, and bluegill would accept our offerings as their home. I smiled knowing many anglers would delight in these new hot spots and create their own treasured memories in the process (see Page 22). And as I anxiously await my favorite hunting season of all, spring turkey season, I think of MDC land managers and their offerings of turkey habitat creation and our MDC private land's crew offering assistance to Missouri private landowners doing the same.

This month I share gratitude for the caretakers, the home-makers, and all who offer up time, talent, and a touch of love to set the stage for memories made.

*Sara Parker Pauley*

**SARA PARKER PAULEY, DIRECTOR**

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# Nature LAB<sup>at</sup> WORK

by Angie Daly Morfeld

The Missouri Department of Conservation team is diverse and dedicated to conserving, protecting, and improving our fish, forest, and wildlife resources.

## Kristen Heath-Acre STATE ORNITHOLOGIST

✳ **State Ornithologist Kristen Heath-Acre** works with MDC and other conservation partners to help monitor birds, conduct research, and promote bird conservation across the state. In addition, she provides outreach programs on birds and collaborates on habitat restoration projects to curb and reverse bird decline.

### A TYPICAL DAY

There is no such thing as typical for Kristen, but she likes it that way. Some days, you can find her in the field, conducting surveys for brown-headed nuthatches in the Ozarks. Other days she is presenting to various groups across the state about birds and bird conservation. Still others, she is analyzing data and collaborating with partners to publish research.

### NOTABLE PROJECTS

“The reintroduction of the brown-headed nuthatch to the Missouri Ozarks is definitely the most memorable,” Kristen said. “From capturing them in Arkansas, to flying them to Missouri, to tracking them through the Ozarks — it is an inspiring example of holistic ecosystem restoration and has been a fulfilling and exciting project to be a part of.”

Kristen is also proud of the research MDC supports through Southern Wings.

“Southern Wings is a program that helps connect state agencies with partners in areas where our



Kristen Heath-Acre scans for tagged brown-headed nuthatches using a very high frequency (VHF) radio antenna in the Missouri Ozarks.

migratory breeding birds overwinter,” Kristen said. “We like to think of many Missouri birds as ‘our birds’ but in reality, they often only breed here and spend much of their annual cycle beyond our borders.”

MDC helps support Missouri migratory birds that are on the decline — like cerulean warblers, which have declined by a staggering 70 percent in the past 50 years — by funding innovative research in the Neotropics.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

Participate in local Audubon chapters and volunteer in citizen-science bird research, like the Christmas Bird Count or the Breeding Bird Survey. Use eBird, a citizen-science bird app on your phone that helps you record bird sightings for research. We really do use this data. Also, practice and preach simple actions for bird conservation like keeping cats indoors, treating your windows to prevent bird collisions, buying bird-friendly coffee, and landscaping with native plants that help shelter and feed our native birds.

### Her Education

- Bachelor's degree, Texas Tech University: biology
- Master's degree, Texas Tech University: natural resources and wildlife management



# In Brief

News and updates from MDC



Don't let their cuteness fool you — these young raccoons are not helpless and are better left in the wild.

## LEAVE WILDLIFE WILD

YOUNG ANIMALS MAY APPEAR ABANDONED, BUT THAT'S SELDOM THE CASE

➔ As we head outdoors during this long-awaited spring season, you may encounter a variety of newborn wildlife. MDC asks that you "leave wildlife wild" by not interfering with newborn or young animals, as it can do more harm than good.

"Young animals are rarely orphaned," said Missouri State Wildlife Veterinarian Sherri Russell. "If the young are left alone, the parent will usually return. Parents are normally out searching for food and cannot constantly attend to their offspring."

Russell added that baby birds are a common newborn people want to help.

"If you see a chick on the ground hopping around and it has feathers, leave it alone and bring pets inside because it is a fledgling and the parents are nearby keeping an eye on it," she said. "Fledglings can spend

up to 10 days hopping on the ground while learning to fly. If you find one that is featherless, you can return it to the nesting area, if possible, as it probably fell out of the nest."

Dogs catching baby rabbits and lawn mowers running over nests are other common issues.

"Rabbits seldom survive in captivity and can actually die of fright from being handled," Russell said. "Even if the animal is injured, return it to the nest because the mother will most likely return."

Despite what many think, wild mothers do not abandon their young because of a human scent, and most newborn animals do not survive in captivity.

"While people have good intentions, the care and rehabilitation of wild animals requires special training, knowledge, facilities — and permits," she explained. "Without such care, wild animals will remain in poor health and could eventually die. And it is illegal to possess many wild animals without a valid state or federal permit."

Russell also noted that wildlife can become dangerous as they mature and can also carry parasites and disease and can damage property.

"Native wildlife can carry mites, ticks, lice, fleas, flukes, roundworms, tapeworms, rabies, distemper, tuberculosis, respiratory diseases, and skin diseases," Russell said. "Some of these can be transmitted to humans."

Although tempting to take them into homes, the best help people can offer wild animals is to leave them alone.

For more information on Missouri's many native wildlife species, visit the MDC online *Field Guide* at [short.mdc.mo.gov/Z9d](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/Z9d).

### CELEBRATE MISSOURI TREES THROUGH ARBOR DAYS IN APRIL

Celebrate the value of Missouri trees and forests during Arbor Days in April by planting native trees and practicing proper tree care.

Missouri Arbor Day is Friday, April 5. Missouri has been observing the state's official Arbor Day on the first Friday in April since 1886 when the General Assembly declared that day be set aside for the appreciation and planting of trees. National Arbor Day is recognized on the last Friday of April, which is April 26.

Get information on backyard tree care — including types of trees for urban and other landscapes, selecting the right tree for the right place, planting tips, watering and pruning information, and more — at [short.mdc.mo.gov/Z3J](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/Z3J).

MDC's George O. White State Forest Nursery near Licking offers residents a variety of low-cost native tree and shrub seedlings for reforestation, windbreaks, erosion control, and wildlife food and cover. Orders are accepted through April 15. For more information, visit [short.mdc.mo.gov/ZNZ](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZNZ).

Communities around the state also hold local Arbor Day activities. For more information on Arbor Day and Missouri's Tree City USA communities, visit the Arbor Day Foundation at [arborday.org](https://arborday.org).

Missouri forests cover about one-third of the state and provide outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat, natural beauty, and watersheds for streams and rivers. Spending time in Missouri forests can provide natural health benefits, too. Exposure to nature contributes to your physical well-being, reducing your blood pressure and heart rate, relieving stress, and boosting your energy level. Get more information at [short.mdc.mo.gov/47t](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/47t).

### 2024 FISHING PROSPECTS

Get a copy of MDC's *2024 Fishing Prospects* for a summary of fish population surveys done in the fall by the state's fisheries biologists at MDC's managed areas, and their predictions of the "best bets" locations for catching certain fish species.

The *2024 Fishing Prospects* is available for free at MDC locations where publications are found, online at [fishing.mdc.mo.gov](https://fishing.mdc.mo.gov), and through MDC's free MO Fishing app available for download through Google Play for Android devices or the App Store for Apple devices.

## Ask MDC

### Got a Question for Ask MDC?

Send it to [AskMDC@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:AskMDC@mdc.mo.gov) or call 573-522-4115, ext. 3848.

**Q. We float-fished the upper Meramec River last spring and caught some smallmouth bass with vibrant red eyes. Is there a reason these had such vibrant red eyes and others were brown?**

➔ Several of the centrarchid bass — largemouth bass, rock bass, smallmouth bass — can have this eye pigment variation. It's like humans having blue, green, and brown eyes. It is thought the red pigment may help them see better in the dark. It's a somewhat common color variation throughout the state; it's not unique to the Meramec.

**Q. A nest of baby squirrels were nesting on a limb that broke off my tree. They don't have their eyes open yet. How do I take care of them?**

➔ If you leave the squirrels and their nest in a protected place near where the branch fell, the mother squirrel should be able to carry them to safety. It's best to leave them in place close by where you found them instead of trying to take care of them yourself. If pets and children are a concern, it's acceptable to place the squirrels in an open container and attach it to the tree from which they fell so the parent can find them and carry them away.

Baby animals are rarely abandoned. The wildlife parent is afraid of people and will retreat



when you approach. If the baby animal is left alone, the parent will usually return. In addition, wildlife parents cannot constantly tend to their young. Often, they spend many hours each day gathering food. For more information, visit [short.mdc.mo.gov/4A5](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/4A5).

**Q. I noticed this nest under an eave of my well house. I saw a bird fly to a nearby tree, but I could not get a good look at it. Could you tell me what bird made this nest?**

➔ This is an eastern phoebe's nest. These flycatchers typically place their mud-and-grass nests in protected nooks on bridges, barns, and houses, thus boosting this species' familiarity to humans. But they also build them near cliffs and cave openings where they forage for flying insects. During the early spring, they frequent areas near water, such as along a lakeshore, where emergences of insects are most likely to occur.

SMALLMOUTH BASS: DAVID STONNER; EASTERN PHOEBE NEST: KALI SMITH





Eastern phoebe nest

These birds prefer to build nests supported by shelves or ledges and out of the reach of ground predators. Females select the sites and build the nest exclusively, although males frequently accompany them. Nests are made of mud, green moss, some leaves, and lined with fine grass stems and hair. The green moss is an invariable

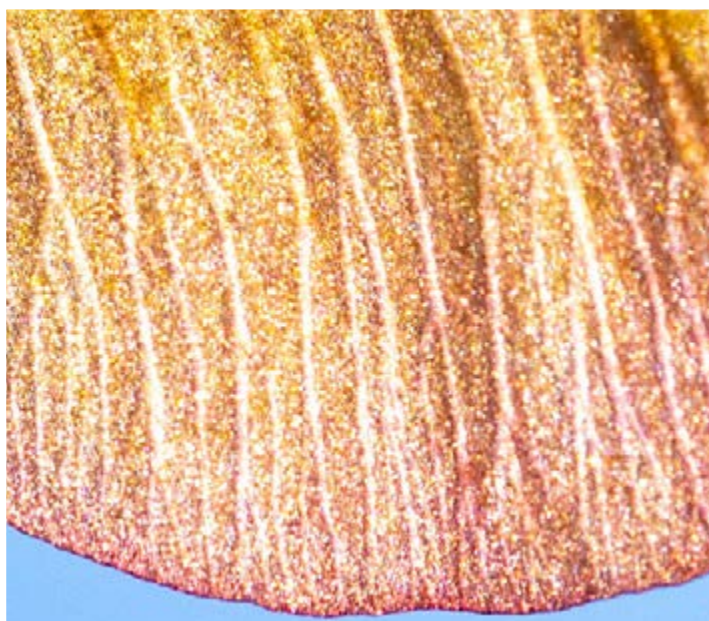
component in nest construction and its presence is diagnostic, although late-season nests in dry periods can have less moss.

These birds are hardy; they winter farther north than most other flycatchers and are one of the earliest returning migrants in spring. For more information, visit [short.mdc.mo.gov/47D](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/47D).

## What IS it?

Can you guess this month's natural wonder?

The answer is on Page 9.



### Corporal Tyler Brown

CAMDEN COUNTY  
CONSERVATION AGENT

*offers this month's*

## AGENT ADVICE

If turkeys are gobbling, spring is here and so is spring turkey season. Youth season is April 6–7, with regular season following April 15–May 5. Take proper precautions to make this season safe. Know your target and what's beyond it. Use hunter orange when carrying your harvest out of the woods and moving afield. Purchase your permit and Telecheck your bird. New this year — all-day hunting on private property. Gain permission if hunting on private property and know your boundaries. If your turkey hunt gets done early, try for the trifacta — look for some morel mushrooms and catch a limit of crappie. That's a fine day in Missouri's spring woods. For more information, consult the *2024 Spring Turkey Hunting Regulations and Information* booklet at [short.mdc.mo.gov/ZZf](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZZf).





## WILD TURKEY AND SWEET CORN SOUP

Few things are tastier than Missouri wild turkey and sweet corn. This soup brings those two things together, a real Show-Me State delicacy.

*Makes 6 cups of soup*

### SOUP

2¼ cups frozen sweet corn  
3 cups whole milk  
2 tablespoons butter  
1 large onion, chopped  
1 large carrot, thinly sliced  
1 celery stalk, thinly sliced  
1 large garlic clove, minced  
2 cups water  
2 large fresh thyme sprigs  
2 fresh rosemary sprigs  
1 bay leaf

6 ounces cooked turkey  
(1 to 1½ cups)  
Freshly ground white pepper  
Two pinches of Spanish  
smoked paprika

### GARNISH

1 small sweet red pepper, diced  
2 green onions, thinly sliced  
2 tablespoons chopped  
fresh chives

**BRING** milk to boil in medium pot. Remove from heat, cover, and let steep while sautéing vegetables.

**MELT** butter in large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and a pinch of salt, and sauté until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add corn kernels, carrot, celery, and garlic; cook until vegetables are soft, stirring frequently, about 15 minutes. Add water, thyme, and rosemary sprigs, bay leaf, and milk. Increase heat and bring to boil. Cover partially, reduce heat to low, and simmer 20 minutes.

**DISCARD** herb sprigs and bay leaf. Cool soup slightly. Puree half of soup in blender until smooth (taking care to press firmly on the lid with your hand during processing to prevent hot liquid from flying out of the top of the blender).

**POUR** contents of blender back into saucepan with remaining soup. Add turkey and stir. Reheat briefly. Season to taste with salt, white pepper, and paprika. Divide among bowls. Garnish with red pepper, green onions, and chives.



This recipe is from  
*Cooking Wild  
in Missouri* by  
Bernadette Dryden,  
available for \$16 at  
most MDC nature  
centers and online at  
[mdcnatureshop.com](http://mdcnatureshop.com).



## CELEBRATE THE OUTDOORS IN APRIL

Spring in Missouri is magical. The days get longer. The woods come alive with tiny buds on trees. Dainty wildflowers spring from the earth. Peepers are peeping, turkeys are scratching, coyotes are calling, owls are hooting, and birds are singing. This is the time of year to get outside and discover nature through hunting, fishing, biking, hiking, birding, camping, kayaking, canoeing, and other outdoor adventures.

Find things to do at [short.mdc.mo.gov/45Z](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/45Z).

Find places to go at [short.mdc.mo.gov/Z9o](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/Z9o).



Spring peeper



Wild turkey



## WHAT IS IT?

### MAPLE SEED

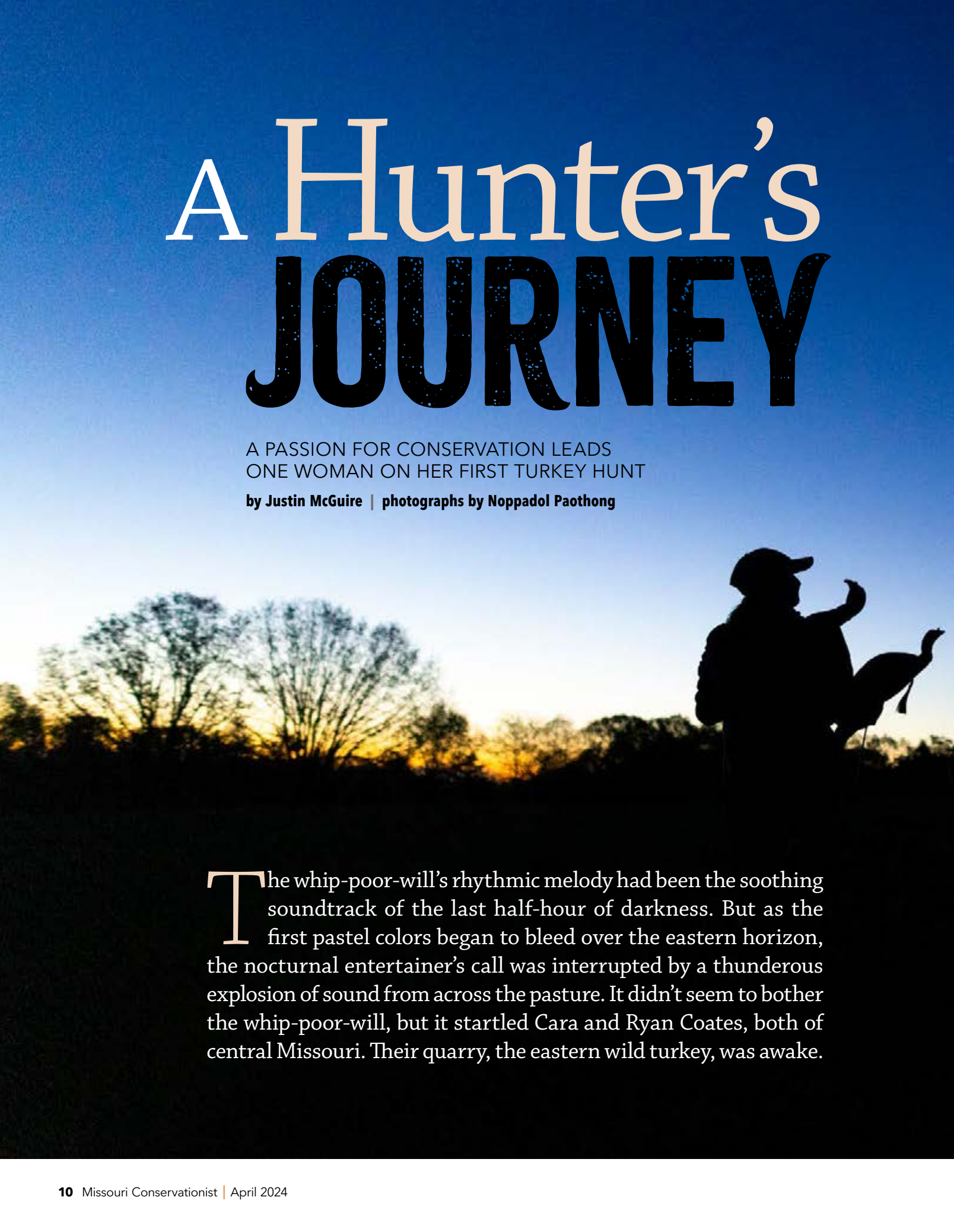
Maples produce distinctive fruits consisting of basal seeds with elongated, flat, rather papery wings. The two seeds are initially fused but break apart when mature. The winged fruits often whirl down from the tree's canopy like little helicopter blades. Globally, there are about 115 species of maples, but Missouri is home to just five species, including sugar, red, silver, box elder, and Siberian maples.



# A Hunter's JOURNEY

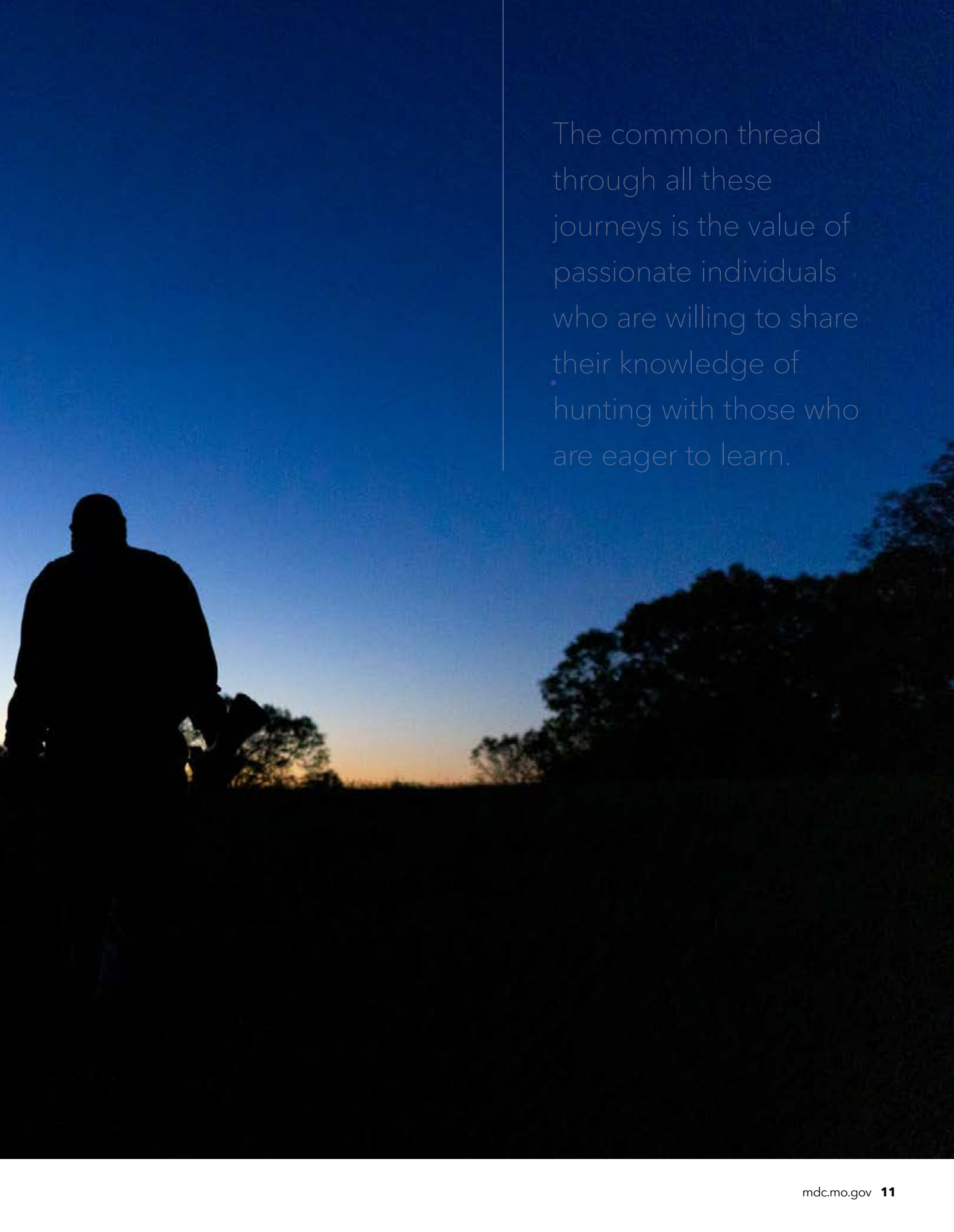
A PASSION FOR CONSERVATION LEADS  
ONE WOMAN ON HER FIRST TURKEY HUNT

by Justin McGuire | photographs by Noppadol Paothong

A silhouette of a person wearing a cap and holding a large turkey, standing in a field with trees in the background under a clear blue sky. The scene is backlit by a low sun, creating a warm glow on the horizon.

The whip-poor-will's rhythmic melody had been the soothing soundtrack of the last half-hour of darkness. But as the first pastel colors began to bleed over the eastern horizon, the nocturnal entertainer's call was interrupted by a thunderous explosion of sound from across the pasture. It didn't seem to bother the whip-poor-will, but it startled Cara and Ryan Coates, both of central Missouri. Their quarry, the eastern wild turkey, was awake.



A full-page background image showing the silhouette of a person standing in a field, looking towards a sunset. The sky is a deep blue, and the horizon is a bright orange-yellow. The person is on the left side of the frame, and there are trees on the right.

The common thread  
through all these  
journeys is the value of  
passionate individuals  
who are willing to share  
their knowledge of  
hunting with those who  
are eager to learn.



Just after dawn, Cara and Ryan await a turkey's arrival on the edge of a pasture.

For Cara, the anticipation she had felt during months of preparation for this moment, her first turkey hunt, had instantly been transformed into a nervous excitement that both rattled her and focused her on the mission at hand. Ryan, Cara's husband and turkey hunting mentor, knew the feeling well. Grinning beneath his camouflage face mask, he reminded Cara to breathe, and they did their best to become invisible against the trunk of the large white oak tree behind them. The show would begin shortly.

## THE JOURNEY TO HUNTING

There is no one-size-fits-all journey to becoming a hunter. The pathways are as diverse as the people who travel them. Some people grow up with family or friends who hunt and become hunters, almost by default. Others grow up with no exposure to hunting, fishing, or recreational shooting and only warm to the idea later in life when they have a desire to connect with nature by obtaining nutritious, local, sustainable sources of food. Still others, like Cara, fall in between.

Cara grew up in a home in which hunting and conservation were strongly supported, and Cara learned to love fishing, but nobody in the family hunted. It wasn't until she attended college that she had the opportunity to expand her skills.

The common thread through all these journeys is the value of passionate individuals who are willing to share their knowledge of hunting with those who are eager to learn.

While attending Murray State University, Cara was a member of the student chapter of The Wildlife Society, a national organization that strives to "inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitats through science-based management and conservation." Cara met another female member of the organization who eventually became her hunting mentor — someone who provided support and motivation, answered questions, and imparted her knowledge. The skills she learned and the confidence she gained from that mentor ignited a passion for hunting.





## MENTORSHIP AND EDUCATION

The relationship between a mentor and mentee is a personal one. As in Cara's case, many mentees prefer that their mentor resemble them — their gender, race, age, ethnicity, and common experiences are important. The more organic the bond, the more fulfilling the experiences will be. After all, these relationships will be tested in hunting situations. Uncomfortable weather and intense emotions — both the highest of highs and lowest of lows that stem from frustration, sadness, or physical demands — are among common factors that require the mentor and mentee to grant each other a healthy measure of grace and understanding. It's an easier exercise between those who more closely relate to one another. Cara found her perfect match among a group of peers.

While in Kentucky, Cara was able to take advantage of the state of Kentucky's apprentice hunting license, which allowed her to hunt in her mentor's presence without completing hunter education certification. Missouri has a similar program. But after college, she moved home and completed Missouri's hunter education certification — a requirement for anyone over the age of 16 who wants to hunt with a firearm. This course teaches how to be a safe, knowledgeable, responsible, and involved hunter, covering topics such as firearm safety, ethics, respecting landowners, survival skills, and biology of game species. Because she was over the age of 16, she was able to take it entirely online.

Cara also started taking other educational courses provided by MDC. She attended a virtual introduction to shotguns, a "field to freezer" course in which she learned to process her own deer meat, and a course that taught her how to preserve the tail fan of a harvested turkey.

Cara's knowledge was growing. She sought out answers to questions on the MDC website and in MDC print publications, she watched hunting shows, and she read wild game cookbooks. She soaked it all in like a sponge. She had experiences hunting deer and squirrel, and while those were formative to her journey as a hunter, her interest was especially piqued when she heard people talk about hunting turkeys. There was just something about the tenor of those conversations that pulled her like a magnet.



Before patterning the shotgun, Ryan reviews safety and firearm operation with Cara. Patterning the shotgun ensures a quick and efficient harvest, and practice makes perfect.



To learn about shotgun patterning, scan this QR code.





Decoys are a common addition to a turkey hunt.



Turkeys have keen eyesight, so staying hidden is important.

Hunting and the stories about it are woven into the fabric of families and communities.

## TALKING TURKEY

The art of communicating hunting stories is as old as humankind, and the cultural importance of these stories can't be overstated. Hunting and the stories about it are woven into the fabric of families and communities, and they're no less important to the identity of some than the DNA contained in their cells. Perhaps chief among modern tale-tellers is the turkey hunter. They tend to speak of turkey hunting with reverence. A turkey hunter polishes their stories like a songwriter wrestles to find the perfect lyrics. Like a song, these stories can be appreciated by anyone, but it is only those who have lived similar experiences that feel the depth of emotion intended by the artist. To Cara, one of the most influential storytellers was her husband, Ryan.

Ryan grew up in a hunting household and has been an avid outdoorsman his entire life. A love of nature was one of the attributes that attracted Cara. In fact,

their first date was a fishing trip to a "secret" bluegill pond on public property. Ryan couldn't wait to share the turkey hunting experience with Cara and set out to make sure they had all the gear they needed. He borrowed decoys, turkey calls, and lots of advice from his dad. Cara planned to use a 20-gauge shotgun that she had purchased from her first mentor at Murray State. The plan was coming together. But aside from the "how," the next hurdle was the "where."

Missouri is made up of 93 percent private land, but there are fantastic hunting opportunities to be had on the huntable portions of the 7 percent of public land. Mark Twain National Forest, Corps of Engineers, MDC, and others provide quality opportunities on properties that are conveniently dispersed around the state. Cara chose another route. Her mom and uncle own adjoining properties totaling 240 acres in Crawford County that contain a mix of hilly cattle pasture and small wooded areas. She gained permission, and preseason scouting revealed signs that turkeys were using the property; an important detail, after all. Cara and Ryan were ready. All that was left was the anticipation of opening day.

As night retreated and dawn took its place, the whip-poor-will's song was replaced by those of daytime birds. That was lost on Cara, though. She was focused on only two sounds — the gobbles of the, by now, four tom turkeys that had made their





Safety first. Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction. ▲

presence known and the sound of her own heartbeat pulsing in her ears. Each time Ryan made a series of hen calls, the four gobblers responded, announcing their progress as they moved closer to the couple. Without moving her head, Cara strained her eyes as far as she could in the direction of the birds, hoping to catch a glimpse of them. A round, black mass appeared in her peripheral vision. Then two, then three, then four black masses. The strutting turkeys, adorned with their bright red, white, and blue heads, came into clear view as they moved from right to left, staying just out of Cara's effective shotgun range. Though they seemed interested, they just wouldn't commit to approaching within shooting distance of the decoy spread. As they often do, the turkeys gave Cara and Ryan the slip that day.

Cara didn't harvest a turkey her first year, but the experience was far from futile. The journey that she took to becoming a turkey hunter was filled with friends and family, and those relationships were strengthened by the common bonds of shared experiences in nature. Additionally, Cara's pool of knowledge became much deeper through her active learning approach. Perhaps the most enduring result of her efforts are the stories that she's now lived.

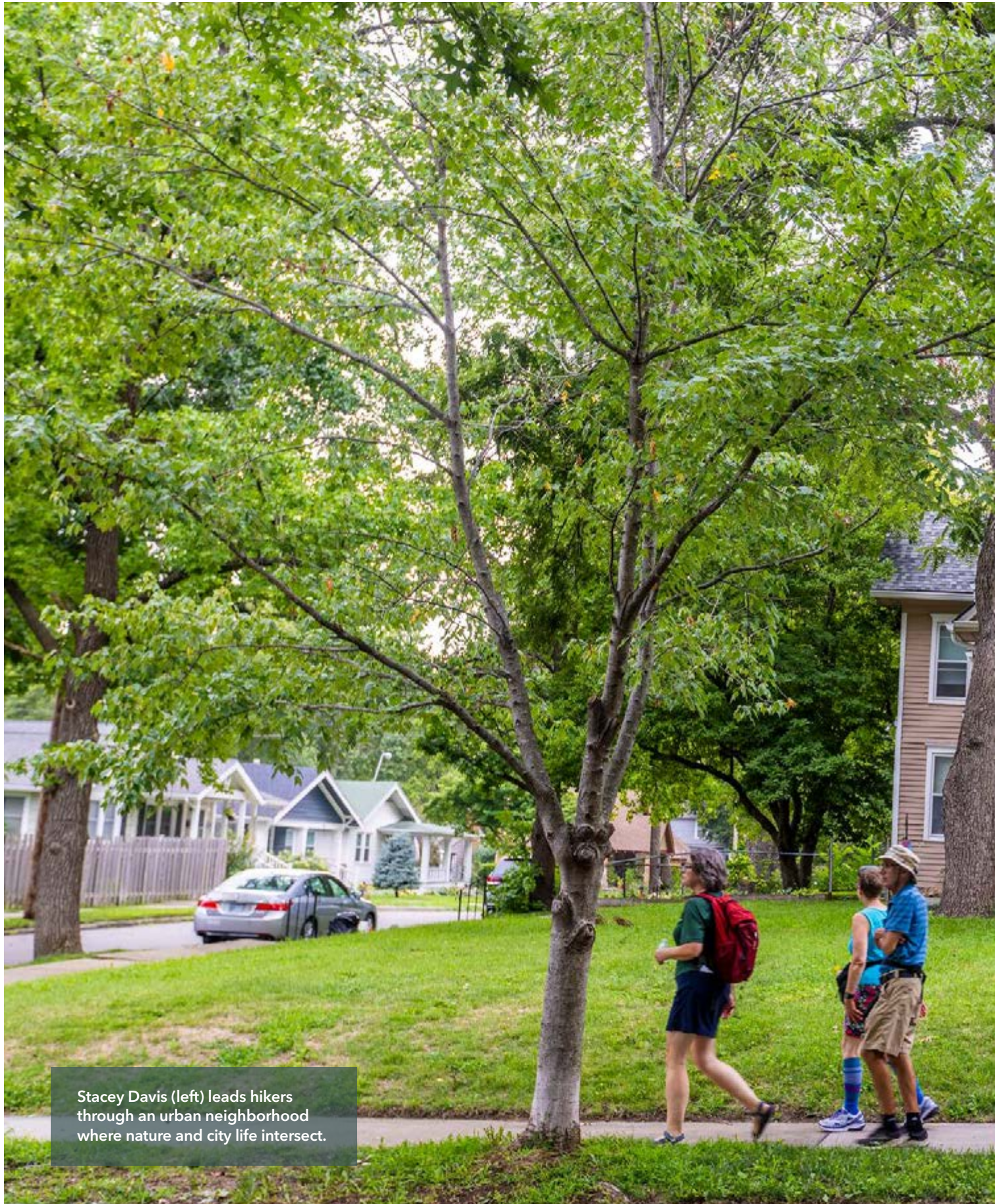
Cara is a turkey hunter. She's already perfecting her tales, and they'll live on through her children and grandchildren long after she's gone. Those who have the pleasure of hearing them

may even be influenced to start down their own journey to becoming a hunter, and the mentee might just become the mentor. Thus, another tradition as old as humanity lives on. ▲

*MDC Hunter Education and Shooting Range Coordinator Justin McGuire is a passionate conservationist. He is a lifelong hunter and angler who also enjoys kayaking and nature photography.*







Stacey Davis (left) leads hikers through an urban neighborhood where nature and city life intersect.



A group of people are walking along a concrete sidewalk in a residential neighborhood. The sidewalk is bordered by green grass. In the background, there are several houses with different siding colors (brown, yellow, white) and large, leafy green trees. The scene is bright and sunny.

# Urban Hiking

PROGRAM CONNECTS PARTICIPANTS  
WITH NATURE IN THE CITY

by Brent Frazee | photographs by David Stonner



**W**hen most people think of hiking, they envision winding paths leading through forests, past rocky outcroppings, or along secluded streams.

They don't picture the type of setting where Stacey Davis was leading a hike on a spring day.

The group was in the heart of Kansas City, near the River Market, exploring spots where nature intersects with busy city life.

The intent wasn't to "get away from it all." Rather, it was to discover the gems often overlooked on the heavily developed urban landscape.

"I want people to realize there is nature right here in the middle of the city," said Davis, who is the manager of The Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center.

"It doesn't have to be a wild space. Even in the urban area, nature is all around us."

That was the root of an urban hiking program Davis developed three years ago. Fueled by her own urban wanderlust, she decided to share her passion through a series of summer hikes in urban neighborhoods.

She started by scouting different historic areas, jotting down notes when she came across interesting features, and making sure the hikes weren't too strenuous. Then she plotted a round-trip course that would cover about 2 miles.

She set most of the hikes for weekday evenings, giving participants time to get home after work. And she varied the parts of the metro area where the hikes would be held.

The result? A program that has proved very popular.

"We usually limit the number of participants to about 12," Davis said. "We almost always fill up and have a waiting list."

"In the past, we've had hikes in wild areas here in the metro area that don't get as much participation. I think people are just interested in the history, the nature, and the architecture of some of these older neighborhoods."

**"I want people to realize there is nature right here in the middle of the city."**

**—Stacey Davis**



Hikers got a taste of nature and history when they followed a path on the grounds of Park University.

## HIKING THE URBAN TRAIL

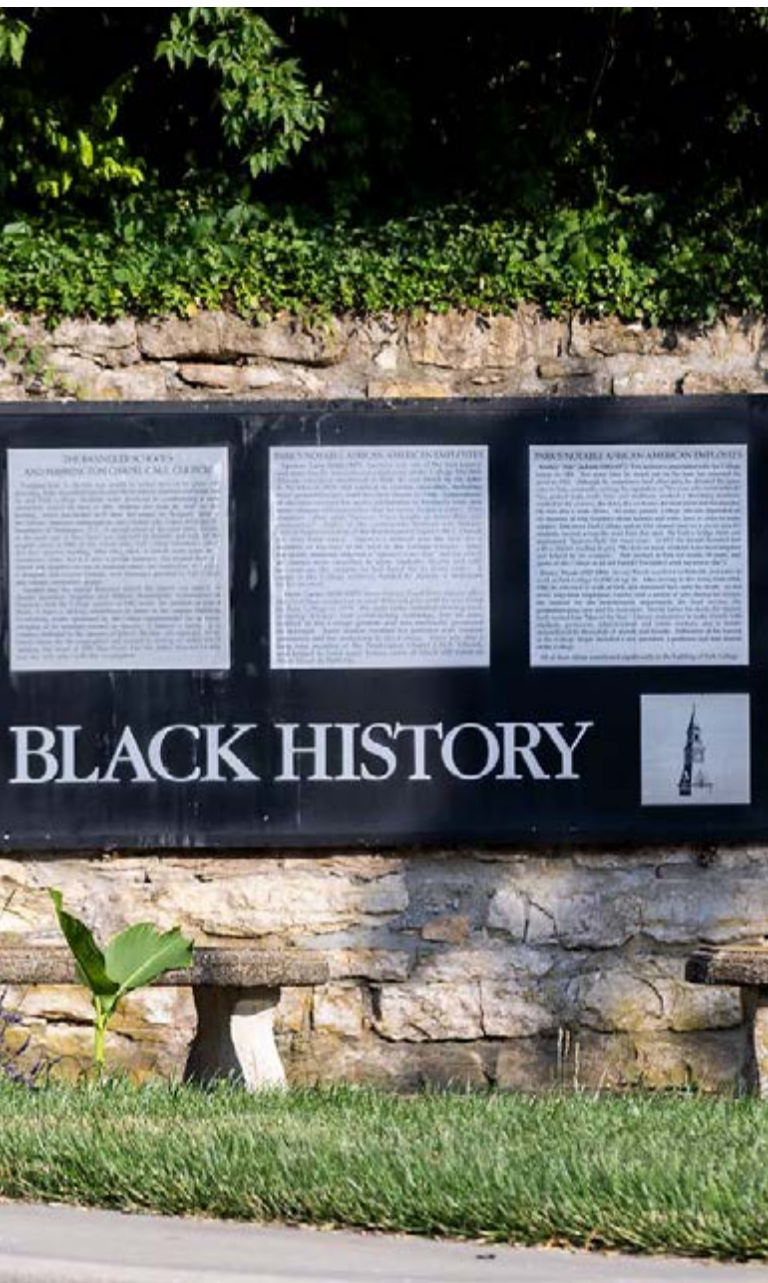
**What:** Guided urban hikes in the Kansas City area offered by MDC.

**Details:** Four weeknight hikes during the summer, usually in historic neighborhoods in the Kansas City metro. Hikes are 2 to 2½ miles. A longer through-hike — usually about 8 miles — wraps up the schedule, usually in late September.

**More details:** Hikes are free but are usually limited to the first 12 who sign up. Registration for each hike can be found at [short.mdc.mo.gov/Zfx](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/Zfx).

**Information:** Email Stacey Davis at [Stacey.Davis@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:Stacey.Davis@mdc.mo.gov).





## Nest Boxes and Native Plants

As Davis led the group out of the River Market to an overlook of the 30-story Commerce Tower skyscraper in downtown Kansas City, she pointed out a shining example of how nature and busy city life can co-exist.

“We (MDC) have a successful peregrine falcon nesting box on top of the Commerce Building,” she said. “It’s the oldest site in Missouri for our peregrine falcon restoration program.”

Peregrine falcons once nested on cliffs along the Missouri and Mississippi rivers, but their population dropped to the point where they became an endangered species in Missouri.

MDC set up nesting boxes on big-city buildings to simulate the birds’ natural habitat, then introduced falcons to their new habitat.



Even in a busy urban setting, flora and fauna thrive.



The program began at the Commerce Tower in 1991, and it has proven to be a success. Dozens of young falcons have fledged from boxes in Kansas City and their progress has been documented by webcams.

Other stops revealed glimpses of nature in the big city. The group paused at a native-plant garden at the end of Main Street and in Columbus Park, where its rich history as Kansas City’s Little Italy was related.

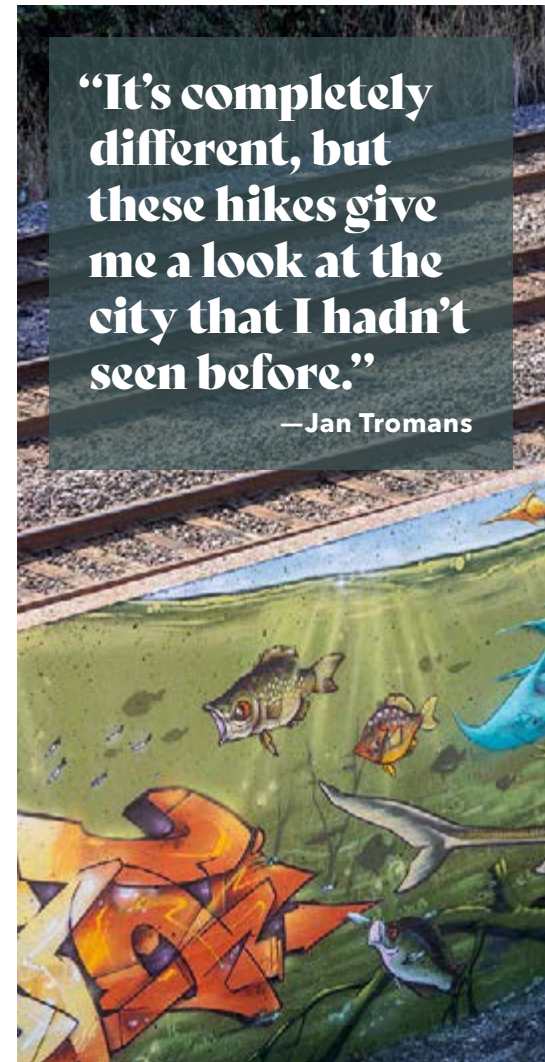
Davis served almost as a tour guide, but one who kept a sharp eye out for nature’s interaction with the urban world.

“We’ll talk about the different types of trees and plants we see, the birds, the invasive species,” she said. “Because we’re in town, everyone has cell service. We’ll take pictures of different plants we run across, then go to an app to tell us what it is.”

“We’ll see lots of pollinators and talk about their role. Even in cemeteries, we’ll find nature.”



Whether it's a small pocket park or a tree-lined street, people are drawn to nature.



**“It’s completely different, but these hikes give me a look at the city that I hadn’t seen before.”**

**—Jan Tromans**

## Hiking Into History

Want to see “old” Kansas City? Join Davis on one of her urban hikes.

She loves to explore historic neighborhoods with lots of character. And apparently, others share her interest.

“If you just focus on what you see on your ride to work, you can get in a rut,” said Jan Tromans, a retiree who lives in the Countryside part of Kansas City. “But if you get off the beaten track and take time to really look at what is in some of these neighborhoods, it’s fascinating.

“I hike in more rural settings, and I love being out in nature. But there’s nature in the city, too.

“It’s completely different, but these hikes give me a look at the city that I hadn’t seen before.”

On a muggy evening last summer, Tromans participated in a hike in the neighborhoods surrounding Rockhurst University. She marveled at a house made of shipping containers and another dwelling with a yard labeled by its owner as an urban wildlife refuge due to its expanse of vegetation and brush.

Part of the area the group hiked into is the home of the oldest neighborhood association in the Kansas City metro area. The

49/63 Neighborhood Coalition Association (named after the streets covered) was founded in 1971 with the goal of fighting urban blight.

Another urban hike on the schedule explored an additional look at old Kansas City. Davis led the group through the Pendleton Heights neighborhood in northeast Kansas City, the first suburb of the urban center.

It was developed as a neighborhood in the late 19th Century in a site that had been a 200-acre farm. Today, visitors can still view streets lined with historic Victorian-style homes and even a castle.

There is nature intertwined with that history. Hikers explored community gardens and an orchard, which was planned by the Pendleton Heights Neighborhood Association and Kansas City Parks and Recreation.

That orchard, which was established in 2013 on a vacant lot, now includes fruit trees, such as apple and peach, that have grown in the area since 1860.

“We try to include a smattering of the different types of neighborhoods in Kansas City,” Davis said. “A lot of these places have a fascinating history.”





Mural art inspired by nature can encourage people to learn more about Missouri fish species.

Davis discusses a nontraditional urban yard, deemed an "urban wildlife refuge," by the owner. The yard, which sits on a corner lot, showcases natural vegetation and brush.



## Other Urban Hikes

There are four weeknight urban hikes on the schedule, and participants must register for each individual event.

Last summer's schedule also included a hike through Parkville, a quaint river town north of Kansas City.

The schedule culminated with a longer through-hike from the Crossroads part of Kansas City to North Kansas City and back.

That 8½-mile hike takes up most of the day, but Davis schedules breaks for lunch.

For participants such as Nansee Baker, the urban hikes provide an opportunity to explore areas close to home.

"I don't have time to take a few days off and go hiking some place," said Baker, who works on the non-medical side of the home health business. "But I can get out after work, so these hikes are perfect for me."

"I love seeing what's in some of these neighborhoods — maybe a house with unusual architecture or a little bakery. It's fun to learn about the old trees in some of these areas and how invasive species have changed some neighborhoods."

The urban setting of the hikes also appeals to Mike and Lara Hampton, who live in the Hyde Park part of Kansas City.

"We hike and bike in rural areas all the time," Lara said. "We're only 20 blocks from where we live, but we had never been to this neighborhood before, so we thought it would be fun to take a guided hike."

Spoken like a true urban explorer. ▲

*Brent Frazee was the outdoors editor for The Kansas City Star for 36 years before retiring in 2016. He continues to freelance for magazines, newspapers, and websites.*



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# BANK FISHING BIG LAKES AND RESERVOIRS

With preparation and planning, fishing without a boat can be fun

by Andrew Branson | photographs by David Stonner

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You don't have to  
have a boat to get in  
on the fishing action.





**W**hen you go to a big reservoir or lake in Missouri, you often see lots of water and lots of fishing boats. You might be left wondering, how can I fish here if I don't have a boat? The good news is you don't have to have a big boat to get in on the angling action. If you follow these tips, you can have just as much success fishing big lakes and reservoirs without benefit of a boat.

## WALK THE BANK

Public boat ramps are an easy way to gain access to the water, but better fishing can often be found if you stay away from commonly used boat accesses. Moving down the bank away from the ramp can get you to unfished areas.

"I recommend Corps of Engineers accesses," said Shane Bush, Table Rock Lake fisheries management biologist. "There are numerous lesser-used public access points at reservoirs that are at the end of public roads. However, anglers should make sure they know exactly what is public land. Contact the Corps of Engineers for questions about locations and whether or not they can fish there."

## USE RADIAL CASTING

Once you find your fishing spot, it's best to cast your line in many different directions before moving on to a new location. For example, while standing in one spot, make several casts into the water from one side, directly in front of you, and then to the other side. If you have no luck after doing this a couple times, move on down the bank. Target any fish habitat — aquatic plants and wood or rock piles — you come across.



**Better fishing can often be found down the bank and away from boat ramps.**



**Radial casting can be very effective in finding fish. Cast in many different directions before moving on.**





Good fishing can often be found above and below dams. Look for posted signs and be aware of any no fishing zones.

## USE MULTIPLE FISHING METHODS

Once you find a location, try setting up some rods on the bank with worms or other bait, while you fish with artificial lures nearby. Remember, if you use more than three poles at any one time, the additional poles must be labeled with your full name and address or conservation number.

## FISHING ZONES

Fish often congregate in areas above and below dams.

“At Stockton Lake from late February to early April, we have excellent bank fishing opportunities on and around the dam for walleye,” said Ben Parnell, fisheries management biologist at Stockton Lake.

For safety reasons, dams typically have a no fishing zone warning close to the dam, so look for posted signs or research zones before your trip.

## TRIBUTARIES AND OUTFLOWS

Samantha Clary, Lake of the Ozarks fisheries management biologist, recommends targeting inlets and outlets of lakes.

“Wherever there is incoming or outgoing water, there’s going to be food and fish,” Clary said. “Fish often use these areas for spawning where gravel banks are used for spawning beds.”

Bull Shoals Lake Fisheries Management Biologist Nathan Recktenwald has similar thoughts about southern Missouri locations.

“I would encourage anglers to concentrate on fishing tributaries during spawning migrations,” Recktenwald said. “From February through April, there are a lot of bank fishermen around the Tecumseh access on Norfork Lake, Haskins Ford on Bull Shoals Lake, Beaver Creek (Kissee Mills) on Bull Shoals Lake, and Powersite Dam on Bull Shoals Lake. They are there for the walleye and white bass spawning runs. During the spring black bass and crappie spawn in April and May, anglers can take advantage of bank fishing just about anywhere there are small gravel banks used for spawning beds by the fish.”



## MANMADE STRUCTURES

Most fish like to hang out near areas that can provide shelter and food. These areas do not have to be naturally formed.

“Manmade structures, such as walkways, bridge pilings, docks, and preventative erosion rip-rap areas, can also hold fish,” Recktenwald said.

Be aware that there are rules that do not allow close fishing around marinas and gas docks.

## MDC FISH ATTRACTORS

MDC fisheries management biologists place brush, log, and rock piles in many lakes to attract fish. These fish attractor locations are recorded and can be found in the free MO Fishing app, available on Android and Apple platforms at [short.mdc.mo.gov/Zi2](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/Zi2).

“Check the MO Fishing app for a map that will show brush piles that have been installed near shore by MDC,” Clary said. “The Larry Gale Access on Lake of the Ozarks is an example of an area that offers brush piles sunk near shore.”

## POINTS AND BREAKS

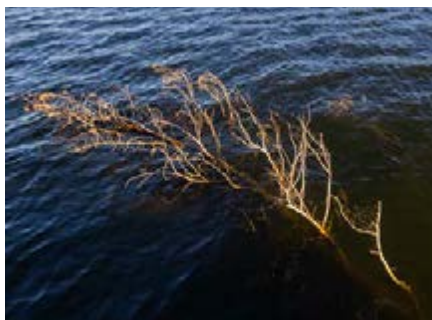
Annie Hentschke, Mark Twain Lake fisheries management biologist, recommends targeting points and breaks.

“Points are shoreline areas that extend out and slope gradually down and into deeper water,” Hentschke explained. “Breaks are areas where water conditions change — shallows begin, waves versus calm water, watercolor change, etc.”



Points and breaks are areas where water depth and conditions change.

Fish can often be found near brush, logs, or rock piles.



## WINDSWEEP BANKS AND COVES

A breeze or strong wind can cause currents that either push bait fish toward the shore or stir up microscopic food. Baitfish will concentrate in these windswept banks and coves, which then brings in larger fish.

“At Truman Reservoir, folks can catch catfish from the bank year-round,” said Chris Brooke, fisheries management biologist at Truman Reservoir. “You can catch white bass and hybrid striped bass on windswept banks in the fall and blue catfish through the winter.”

If you are fishing big reservoirs and lakes, be willing to try different strategies until you find what works on a particular day. All lakes are different and a strategy that works well at one lake may not work as well at another.

“Fishing from the bank can be challenging at Table Rock because the water is so clear, and fish are so deep most of the year,” Bush said. “It would probably be good to scale down your expectations on what you can catch from the bank in a large





Fish often take shelter around docks. Knowing where the fish hang out can lead to success.



reservoir because of this. Sunfish species are easy to come by, and bass can be caught during certain times of the year near the bank.”

Bush and Brooke point out some similarities between Table Rock Lake and Truman Reservoir. They say to forget about trying to catch a crappie from the bank unless it’s mid-April through mid-May. If you’re wanting to target bass, they recommend fishing steeper sided banks where deep water is close by. In the spring, fish further up the river arms to target white bass and walleye.

So, you don’t have a boat? No problem. With a little planning and preparation, you can be successful and have a great time fishing big lakes from the bank. ▲

*Andrew Branson has been with MDC since 2005 and now works out of the headquarters in Jefferson City. He spends his free time fishing big lakes and reservoirs.*





# Get Outside

in APRIL →

Ways to connect with nature



Black morel

Half-free morel



## I'm Home

Cliff swallows arrive in April and return, in many cases, to the colony of their birth. Their clusters of juglike mud nests are attached to overpasses, bridges, culverts, barns, and cliffs. In spring, these birds gather around rural mud puddles, where they roll little bits of mud into a ball and fly off, carrying it in their mouth to the nearby nest they are constructing.

## The State Flower

Hawthorns are shrubs or small trees that bloom from April to June. The hawthorn's white flowers grow in clusters and resemble small apple blossoms. There are more than 75 types of hawthorns in Missouri, including our official state flower, the **downy hawthorn**.



## Morel Madness

It's morel mushroom season in Missouri, so get ready to hear that infamous question — "Finding any?" Morels are choice edible mushrooms that are difficult to spot but are not hard to learn to identify. Missouri has three kinds of morel mushrooms — black, yellow, and half-free.

- Black morels usually only reach a few inches high. Some observers have noted they often come out a little earlier than the yellow morels.
- Yellow morels can sometimes get huge, up to a foot high and 6 inches thick.
- Half-free morels occur scattered in mixed woods, and they usually pop up before the other morels.

### VIRTUAL PROGRAM

## Where Can I Hunt for Mushrooms?



Wednesday • April 10 • 12-12:30 p.m.

Online only

Registration required by April 9. Call 888-283-0364 or visit [short.mdc.mo.gov/4hB](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/4hB).

All ages

It is morel mushroom season. We will discuss not only morels but the life cycle of other mushrooms, habitat, and locations where to look as well as rule and regulations.

### Natural Events to See This Month

Here's what's going on in the natural world.



Male leopard frogs call at sunset.



Gartersnakes become active.



Black bears become active again.



SOUTHWEST REGION

## Veterans' Free Fishing Day

Saturday • April 20 • 7 a.m.-3 p.m.

Bennett Spring Fish Hatchery, 26142 Hwy. 64A, Lebanon, MO 65536  
Registration not required. For more information, contact Ben Havens at [Ben.Havens@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:Ben.Havens@mdc.mo.gov) or call the hatchery at 417-532-4418.  
All ages

At Veterans' Fishing Day, fishing is free for veterans only. There is no license or daily tag fee. All veterans can pick up free trout tags at the park store on the Friday evening before or anytime on Saturday during the event.

During the event, part of the park's Zone 2 fishing area will be specially stocked and reserved for anglers who are veterans. Adjacent to the fishing area, volunteers will be hosting a hospitality tent featuring fly-tying demos, lessons, casting instruction, and the latest adaptive fishing equipment.

If you are interested in trout fishing, come out and fish with one of our heroes. Many volunteers will be on hand to show you the ropes. Practice with some of the casting games on the lawn or tie up a fly.

## Missouri is no Shrinking Violet

Missouri is home to 17 species of violets and April is their month! Get outside and see how many you can find. Here's a hint — don't just look at their blooms. Study their leaves as well. Also, use MDC's *Field Guide* as your resource. There is a full page dedicated just to violets — [short.mdc.mo.gov/4h8](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/4h8).



Yellow violet



Field pansy



Bird's-foot violet



Gooseberry flowers provide nectar for springtime insects.



Giant swallowtails begin to appear in April.

NEVER LOSE TOUCH

# RECONNECT WITH NATURE

Adventure can happen anywhere. Download the free **MO Outdoors** app for great places to see nature near you.

Available on the App Store

Download for Android



# Places to Go

## ST. LOUIS REGION

### Meramec Conservation Area

Brought to you by the letter H  
by Larry Archer

✳ If Meramec Conservation Area (CA) had an address on Sesame Street, it would most likely be brought to you by the letter H, as in hiking, horseback riding, and hunting.

Located on 4,045 acres in Franklin County, Meramec CA has nearly 18 miles of trails, including a 10.4-mile multiuse trail (hiking, biking, and horseback riding) and a 1.3-mile ADA-accessible trail, both of which are easy to moderate. The 6.1-mile, hiking-only trail is a bit more challenging, said Resource Forester Matt Pilz.

"I would consider it to be a more rugged and strenuous kind of trail that has a lot of switchbacks and ups and downs," Pilz said.

Additional care should be taken in April and early May, as the area is also a popular turkey hunting destination, he said.

"Being a pretty good-sized area with over 4,000 acres of woods, it's pretty good turkey habitat, so during the season, we get quite a few turkey hunters here," Pilz said.

The area is also a good place for birding.

"It is a great area for birds because of the variety of habitat," he said. "You have the Meramec River corridor and some large sections of bottomland forest, so there's quite a few of the migrating Neotropical warblers."



"The best way to access the river, other than hiking through the woods, would be to go to the Fife Bottom tract of the Meramec Conservation Area. We have a small trail that leads out to the gravel bar on the river, so it's a good place to put in or take out if you're doing a float."

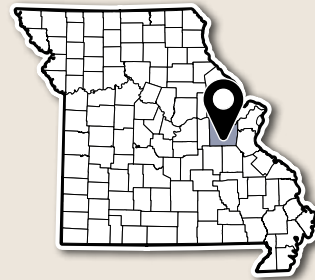
—Resource Forester Matt Pilz

NORRADOI PAOTONG





Meramec Conservation Area features a variety of lengths and difficulties of trails, including this 1.3-mile ADA-accessible trail. By April, visitors will find the flowering dogwood (inset) in bloom.



## MERAMEC CONSERVATION AREA

consists of 4,045 acres in Franklin County.  
From I-44 near Sullivan, take Highway 185 south  
5 miles to the area sign.

38.2254, -91.0754

[short.mdc.mo.gov/4nt](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/4nt) 636-441-4554

### WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU VISIT



**Biking** Includes 5 miles of improved and unimproved road in addition to multiuse trail. Trails are closed to biking during firearms deer and spring turkey seasons.



**Birdwatching** Included in the National Audubon Society's Upper/Middle Meramec River Watershed Important Bird Area ([short.mdc.mo.gov/4hk](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/4hk)). The eBird list of birds recorded at Meramec CA in April is available at [short.mdc.mo.gov/4hZ](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/4hZ).



**Fishing** Black bass, catfish, rock bass, suckers, sunfish.



**Hunting Deer and turkey.** Regulations are subject to annual changes. Refer to MDC's regulation page online at [short.mdc.mo.gov/Zjw](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/Zjw) for regulations.

Also **bear** and **squirrel**.



**Trails** Multiuse (hike/bike/horse) trail of 10.2 miles. Multiuse trails and service roads closed to bicycle and equestrian use during firearms deer and spring turkey seasons. There is also a 1.3-mile ADA-accessible trail and a 6.1-mile hiking trail.

### WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN YOU VISIT



Black bear



Pileated woodpecker



Coyote



Blue-gray gnatcatcher





## Painted Lady

*Vanessa cardui*

### Status

Summer resident

### Size

Wingspan: 1¾–2½ inches

### Distribution

Statewide

**L**ike the American lady, the painted lady is an orange-and-black butterfly with white spots on the dark forewing tips and white cobwebbing on the brown undersides of the hindwings. Painted ladies have four small eyespots on the underside of the hindwing. Larvae are greenish-yellow to lavender, with yellowish spines and a yellow stripe on the sides. The painted lady is found worldwide, except for South America and Antarctica. It occurs in nearly any kind of open habitat.



### Did You Know?

The commonness and abundance of this butterfly make it an excellent subject for biological investigation. Schoolchildren witness the process of larval growth and metamorphosis. Professional biologists study the migration patterns and mating behaviors.



### LIFE CYCLE

Painted ladies arrive from the south in late March and fly until November. Females lay a large number of small eggs in their lifetime, opting for quantity over quality. In fact, painted ladies frequently lay eggs on host plants within patches of nectar flowers even if those plants don't provide for optimal caterpillar growth.



### FOODS

Caterpillars construct a silk nest on the leaves of their host plants, which shelters them as they chew. They prefer thistle leaves but use over 100 species of nonwoody plants. Their ability to feed on a wide variety of plants aids in the nearly worldwide range of this species. Adults feed on nectar from a variety of flowers, which plays a role in pollination.



# Outdoor Calendar

❖ MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION ❖

## Free MO Hunting and MO Fishing Apps

MO Hunting makes it easy to view permits, electronically notch them, and Telecheck your harvest. MO Fishing lets you view permits, find great places to fish, and ID your catch. Get both in Android or iPhone platforms at [short.mdc.mo.gov/Zi2](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/Zi2).



## FISHING

### Black Bass

Impounded waters and non-Ozark streams:  
Open all year

Most streams south of the Missouri River:

- ▶ Catch-and-Release:  
March 1–May 24, 2024
- ▶ Catch-and-Keep:  
May 25, 2024–Feb. 28, 2025

### Bullfrog, Green Frog

June 30 at sunset–Oct. 31, 2024

### Nongame Fish Gigging

Impounded waters, sunrise to sunset:  
Feb. 16–Sept. 14, 2024

### Paddlefish

Statewide:  
March 15–April 30, 2024

On the Mississippi River:  
March 15–May 15, 2024  
Sept. 15–Dec. 15, 2024

### Trout Parks

State trout parks are open seven days a week  
March 1 through Oct. 31.

Catch-and-Keep:  
March 1–Oct. 31, 2024

## HUNTING

### Bullfrog, Green Frog

June 30 at sunset–Oct. 31, 2024

### Coyote

Restrictions apply during April, spring turkey season, and firearms deer season.

Open all year

### Crows

Nov. 1, 2024–March 3, 2025

### Deer

Archery:

Sept. 15–Nov. 15, 2024  
Nov. 27, 2024–Jan. 15, 2025

Firearms:

- ▶ Early Antlerless Portion  
(open areas only): Oct. 11–13, 2024
- ▶ Early Youth Portion (ages 6–15):  
Nov. 2–3, 2024
- ▶ November Portion:  
Nov. 16–26, 2024
- ▶ CWD Portion (open areas only):  
Nov. 27–Dec. 1, 2024
- ▶ Late Youth Portion (ages 6–15):  
Nov. 29–Dec. 1, 2024
- ▶ Late Antlerless Portion (open areas only):  
Dec. 7–15, 2024
- ▶ Alternative Methods Portion:  
Dec. 28, 2024–Jan. 7, 2025

### Groundhog (Woodchuck)

May 6–Dec. 15, 2024

### Pheasant

Youth (ages 6–15):  
Oct. 26–27, 2024

Regular:

Nov. 1, 2024–Jan. 15, 2025

### Quail

Youth (ages 6–15):  
Oct. 26–27, 2024

Regular:

Nov. 1, 2024–Jan. 15, 2025

### Rabbits

Oct. 1, 2024–Feb. 15, 2025

### Squirrels

May 25, 2024–Feb. 15, 2025

### Turkey

Archery:

Sept. 15–Nov. 15, 2024  
Nov. 27, 2024–Jan. 15, 2025

Firearms:

- ▶ Youth (ages 6–15): April 6–7, 2024
- ▶ Spring: April 15–May 5, 2024
- ▶ Fall: Oct. 1–31, 2024

### Waterfowl

See the Migratory Bird and Waterfowl  
Hunting Digest or visit [short.mdc.mo.gov/ZZx](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZZx)  
for more information.

## TRAPPING

**Special Trapping Season for  
Private Lands Only:  
Coyote, Opossum, Raccoon,  
Striped Skunk**

March 1–April 14, 2024



ILLUSTRATION: MARK RATHIEL

For complete information about seasons, limits, methods, and restrictions, consult the *Wildlife Code of Missouri* at [short.mdc.mo.gov/Zib](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/Zib). Current hunting, trapping, and fishing regulation booklets are available from local permit vendors or online at [short.mdc.mo.gov/ZZf](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZZf).





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How will spring transform you? Get out and experience all the season's beauty, like this regal fritillary caterpillar. Perhaps you, too, will be changed by the experience.

📷 by **Noppadol Paothong**

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